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A Doctor's New Verdict on the JFK Death

Albuquerque, N.M.

Dr. James Weston, president-elect of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, says a rigid back brace prevented President Kennedy from slumping forward after being wounded in the neck, allowing a second bullet to hit him in the head.

Weston, who said he is certain Kennedy was hit by two bullets fired over his right shoulder, said in an interview Wednesday that the head wound was fatal but Kennedy could have survived the neck wound.

He said the brace Kennedy was wearing held his trunk rigid after he was hit in the neck. He said the brace prevented Kennedy from slumping forward or sideways, and the second bullet hit him in the head.

Weston, the New Mexico state medical examiner, said he reached his conclusions after studying previously secret data dealing with the Kennedy assassination.

He said he spent a week in the National Archives in Washington, studying photographs, X-rays and medical reports at the request of CBS News for a documentary on presidential assassinations.

Weston said Kennedy's injuries were more extensive than he had thought.

"It was much more grotesque than I expected it to be," he said.

"It made me feel almost ill, and I can understand why the Warren Commission didn't want the details released unless they had to be."

Weston said he is satisfied with the medical aspect of the inquiry.

"I don't believe anybody could find any more," he said.

Associated Press